

HAZARD ALERT

CPWR
THE CENTER FOR CONSTRUCTION
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

LEAD POISONING



Am I in danger?

The lead paint “ban” in 1978 was only for residential use in the U.S. Lead is still in pre-1978 structures and in commercial and industrial paints.

You can be exposed to lead during ...

- demolition
- maintenance
- renovation

If you are working with materials that have lead paint and you are ...

- stripping
- grinding
- blasting
- sanding
- heating
- cutting
- scraping

Then you are being exposed to lead.

If you don't change your clothes and work boots before leaving work, you can take lead dust home, and **your family can get lead poisoning**. You can also carry lead dust on or in your vehicle to another worksite – or your home.

What will lead poisoning do to me – or my family?

Lead can damage your kidneys, brain, nervous system and cause blood problems. The number of health problems is too lengthy to list, but here are a few of them:

- impotence
- fatigue
- forgetfulness
- poor concentration
- reduced reaction time
- weakness



The first signs of severe poisoning may be upset stomach (or cramps), weakness, joint pain, and/or being tired.

Children suffer greatly from lead. It can lead to many problems, including emotional changes and brain damage.

Find out more about construction hazards.

Get more of these Hazard Alert cards – and cards on other topics.

Call 301-578-8500

If lead is present...



1 Get training

EPA, HUD and OSHA say your employer must train you if you could be exposed to lead at work. Once trained, follow all the rules. Special procedures for work on lead-coated surfaces will prevent you from getting lead poisoning.



2 Use methods to control dust

Workers and contractors have lots of options. Using vacuum attachments with power tools can control lead dust at the source. When using chemical paint strippers, read the label and use the recommended personal protective equipment.



3 Wear a respirator

Even small amounts of lead dust can hurt you. If you create lead dust, you need a respirator. Minimum protection from lead dust begins with a half-face respirator with a P-100 filter or a P-100 filtering facepiece. Talk to your supervisor about the levels of lead in the air and make sure you are protected.

OSHA requires your employer to protect you:

When lead in the air reaches a certain level, your employer must provide you with the right equipment and a room for changing clothes so you don't take lead home.

Find out OSHA's requirements: www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3142.pdf.

Here's how to protect you and your family

- Wash your face and hands before you smoke, eat or drink.
- Do not wear work clothes home. Wipe down the seat of your car or truck. Children are very sensitive to lead.
- Get a blood test. OSHA says your employer must test your blood-lead level if you are around high concentrations of lead (30 micrograms of lead per cubic meter of air).

If you think you are in danger:

**Contact your supervisor.
Contact your union.**

**Call OSHA
1-800-321-OSHA**